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Security Council

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Identical letters dated 21 July 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to you to draw your attention to a developing matter of concern in the Middle East that could affect the peace and security of the region.

At the Security Council meeting on 21 July 2010, members of the Council and the wider international community expressed concerns about the phenomenon of unauthorized vessels that seek to violate the existing naval blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip. Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe stated: "Such convoys are not helpful to resolving the basic economic problems of Gaza and needlessly carry the potential for escalation".

In defiance of these calls, it appears that two ships, *Junia* and *Julia*, plan to depart from Lebanon and sail to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. The stated intention of these vessels is to violate the existing naval blockade of Gaza.

Given the ongoing armed conflict between the Hamas terrorist organization and the State of Israel, compounded by the fact that these ships originate from Lebanon, which remains in a state of hostility with Israel, Israel reserves its right under international law to use all necessary means to prevent these ships from violating the aforementioned naval blockade. Furthermore, it cannot be ruled out that these vessels carry weapons or individuals with provocative and confrontational intentions.

In addition, I wish to highlight that all goods that are not weapons or materiel for war-like purposes are now entering the Gaza Strip through appropriate mechanisms that ensure their delivery as well as their civilian nature. The organizers of the aforementioned boats are fully aware of these internationally recognized and unimpeded channels to deliver aid to the Gaza Strip. However, the organizers, similar to previous attempts by others, seek to incite a confrontation and raise tension in our region.

In view of these circumstances, Israel calls upon the Government of Lebanon to demonstrate responsibility and to prevent these boats from departing to the Gaza Strip. Such action will prevent any possible escalation. Israel further calls upon the international community to exercise its influence in order to prevent these boats from departing and to discourage their nationals from taking part in such actions.

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I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gabriela **Shalev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative